

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: DR LAURIN DENIES 1984 AROUND THE CORNER
IN QUEBEC

1. QUEBEC MINISTER OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND GODFATHER OF
CONTROVERSIAL LANGUAGE ACT, CAMILLE LAURIN, YESTERDAY VIGOR-
OUSLY DENIED PRESS REPORTS ALLEGING THAT QUEBEC CULTURAL
WHITE PAPER, WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN RELEASED TO PUBLIC,
CONTAINS PROVISIONS THAT WOULD INTRODUCE DEGREE OF STATE CONTROL
IN QUEBEC "SURPASSING ANYTHING PREVIOUSLY KNOWN IN NORTH
AMERICA." TITLE OF THREE PAGE ARTICLE IN MACLEAN'S ISSUE OF
MARCH 6 IS: "LEVESQUE'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC OF
QUEBEC; A GRAND DESIGN FOR A NEW ORDER." MACLEAN'S ARTICLE,
WHICH WE HAVE NOT YET READ, ALLEGEDLY SUGGESTS THAT CULTURAL
POLICY OUTLINED IN WHITE PAPER WOULD BE NOTHING LESS THAN
A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF QUEBEC A YEAR BEFORE THE PROMISED
REFERENDUM IS HELD.

2. LAURIN SHOCKED HIS AUDIENCE BY CONTENDING IN ENGLISH
YESTERDAY BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND AT SUBSEQUENT PRESS
CONFERENCE THAT MCLEAN'S ARTICLE IS "FALSE, DISTORTED, AND
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VICIOUS." HE ALSO CRITICIZED REPORT OF WHITE PAPER CARRIED
BY CTV ON FEBRUARY 28 WHICH REPORTEDLY RESISTED
EDITORIAL COMMENT. THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, HUMANISM,
AND LIBERTY ARE THE FOUNDATION, LAURIN ASSERTED OF THE
CULTURAL POLICY TO BE PROPOSED. HE ACCUSED "CERTAIN ORGANS"
OF THE PRESS OF MOUNTING A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT
HIM AND OF ATTEMPTING GIVE IMPRESSION THAT THE POLITICAL

SOVEREIGNTY OF QUEBEC WILL LEAD DIRECTLY TO A FASCIST, RACIST STATE. LEVESQUE, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM OPPOSITION DEPUTY BRYCE MACKASEY, LOST HIS COOL FOR FIRST TIME IN ASSEMBLY SINCE BECOMING PREMIER. IN ANGRY RESPONSE, HE RETORTED THAT PQ HAS NO LESSONS TO LEARN FROM ANYONE ON QUESTION OF DEMOCRACY, AND DENOUNCED THOSE WHO "PREMATURELY" USE WORDS LIKE FASCIST OR OTHER CALOMNIES.

3. COMMENT: MACCLEAN'S TOUCHED RAW PQ NERVE IN PRESENTING CULTURAL WHITE PAPER AS ORWELLIAN ATTEMPT REORDER QUEBEC SOCIETY. LEVESQUE HAS MADE OBVIOUS ATTEMPT DOWNPLAY CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL REFORM PROGRAMS. HE RECOGNIZES THAT LARGE SEGMENT OF POPULATION IS FEARFUL THAT SUCH CONTROVERSY DETRACTS INTEREST AND GOVERNMENT ENERGIES FROM CRUCIAL BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES AT HEIGHT OF ECONOMIC RECESSION. MOREOVER, LEVESQUE NOT ANXIOUS RAISE EMOTIVE ISSUES WHICH TRUDEAU MIGHT EXPLOIT IN COMING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. LEVESQUE'S HAND WAS FORCED RECENTLY IN PREMATURELY PRESENTING HOUSING "BLACK PAPER." PRESENT EM-BROGLIO OVER WHITE PAPER COULD CAUSE PRESSURES TO MOUNT AGAIN FORCING LEVESQUE ALLOW LAURIN RELEASE WHITE PAPER TO PROVE HIS GOVERNMENT IS NOT ANTIDEMOCRATIC; AN ACTION HE SEEMED WISH POSTPONE AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER FEDERAL ELECTION. WHATEVER ITS ORIGINS, THE MACLEAN ARTICLE MAY HELP IGNITE CONTROVERSIAL CULTURAL ISSUES LIKELY ASSIST TRUDEAU ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN BY REKINDLING NATIONAL UNITY ISSUE IN HIGHLY EMOTIONAL CONTEXT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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